

HUMAN  
*Depravity and Salvability*

BY

REV. GEORGE JOHNSON,

LOWER HORTON.

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"I also will show my opinion."—JOB.

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# HUMAN DEPRAVITY

AND

## SALVABILITY.

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By Adam's transgression man is deeply fallen and depraved. He has lost the moral image of God. This image is not only become defaced, but is utterly obliterated. It is erased from the human soul. He no longer resembles God in righteousness and holiness, and bears no real likeness to him in knowledge, dominion and power. He has lost that essential, substantial, real and perfect resemblance to the Divine Being, in which he was originally created. He who was made holy, pure, free from imperfection, and declared by God "very good," has become a fallen, depraved sinner, alienated from God, and exposed to His displeasure and wrath. He has lost the image, peace, favor and enjoyment of God; is liable to death temporal and eternal; is wholly destitute of that primitive righteousness and holiness in which he was created; and has become subject to sorrow, pain, suffering, sickness and disease. He brings with him into the world a depraved, sinful nature, inclined to evil and adverse to good. His will is opposed to the will of God; his passions and appetites are earthly, sensual and devilish; and his affections are placed on, and he is pleased with, the things of time and sense. He is then a fallen and fearfully depraved being!

In proof of these statements let us carefully examine the doctrine of

### HUMAN DEPRAVITY.

On a subject of such vast importance we can only be properly guided by the infallable Word of God. To the Law and the Testimony, to the declarations of the Divine Being, we must scrupulously attend, in order that we may ascertain the mind of the Most High.

In Scripture it is said, "Adam begat a son in his own likeness, after his image." (Gen. 5, 3.) Adam being a fallen and corrupt sinner, he begat a son in his own image, depraved, sinful, defiled, frail, mortal and miserable, liable to sorrow, pain, suffering and death. He was a sinner like himself, degenerate, corrupt, guilty and obnoxious to wrath. It was impossible that he who was impure, fallen from the Divine image, with a nature wholly depraved, could beget a pure and holy offspring. This is as impossible as that an impure fountain should send forth pure water, or that a cause should produce effects perfectly dissimilar from itself.

"God saw that every imagination of the thoughts of man's heart," or soul, "was only evil continually," (Gen. 6, 5), and that "from his youth." (Gen. 8, 21). The embryo of every thought, the conception of every idea, with all the perceptions, sensations, purposes, motives and desires, are *only evil*. The fountain, the soul, the source of these affections, is perfectly poisoned, and that without any mixture of good. The whole man is polluted, and that *continually*. In a state of nature there is no good in him: the stream of sin is full, strong and constant. And this depravity he develops from *his youth*. He brought it into the world with him, being conceived and shapen in it, and he manifests it from his very childhood. It is therefore justly affirmed that man has a depraved nature, and the imaginations of his heart are "evil from his youth."

David says, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me." (Ps. 51, 5.) He was born, as are all the human race, with strong propensities and dispositions to sin. He was, as well as all others, the corrupted, degenerate offspring of corrupted, degenerate parents. This shows the source whence transgressions proceed. The sinful principle diffused itself through the whole, so that the body and soul grew up, and came into the world, in a state of spiritual corruption and moral imperfection. From this evil fountain flow all the foul streams of iniquity.

Again: "The wicked are estranged from the womb; they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies." (Ps. 58, 3.) The *wicked*, or fallen men, are *estranged* from God, and from all godliness, *from the womb*. From their tender years, or rather strictly and properly, from their birth: their very natures and principles are corrupt even from their infancy: they are the wicked offspring of sinful parents. They go astray by actual sins, the fruit of their original corruption, *as soon as they are born*—as soon as ever they are capable of the exercise of reason, and the practice of sinning."—*Benson*. These words then prove that man is "alienated from the life of God," from the time of his coming into the world. From the time of his birth,



he "knew not the way of truth," neither can he, unless he is "born of God."

"Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one." (Job 14, 4.) It is the common and inevitable lot of every man who descends from sinful parents, and being thus infected with original corruption, to be unavoidable unclean. It is as impossible for clean children to come from unclean parents, or clean performances from an unclean principle, as for pure streams to proceed from impure fountains, grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles.

Dr. Adam Clarke says, "The text refers to man's *original* and corrupt nature. Every man that is born into the world comes into it in a corrupt or sinful state. This is called *original sin*; and is derived from fallen Adam, who is the stock, to the utmost ramifications of the human family."

Here Job humbly acknowledges his total sinfulness; and confesses that he deserved the judgment, which he prays God not to inflict.

Again: "What is man that he should be clean? and he that is born of a woman, that he should be righteous?" (Job 15, 14.) What is weak, frail, sickly, dying, imperfect, miserable man, that he should be *clean*? Is it possible for him who is born of fallen, sinful parents, and has derived from them a depraved, infirm, corrupt nature, to be pure in the sight of an infinitely holy God? Can he be *righteous* in his nature, in his own eyes, or in the eyes of others, and especially in the sight of the Just and Holy One? Many passages of Scripture represent man, by natural birth, in a state of defilement; and that every human being born in the world is morally polluted.

Job says, "Vain man would be wise, though man be born a wild ass's colt." (Job 11, 12.) He is untamed, fierce, untractable, wild, hard to be subdued or brought into subjection. As to spiritual things he is ignorant, apathetic, stupid and insensible. He has no relish for them; but is heady, conceited and ungovernable, supposing himself to be free like the wild ass's colt. Such is man from his birth. This evil is now natural, hereditary, and common to all men.

Solomon says, "Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child." (Prov. 22, 15.) This foolishness refers to inbred corruption, and depravity of nature; to an indisposition to what is good, and a strong propensity to evil. It is bound up in the heart of a child; is fixed and settled there; being born with him, and rooted in his very nature. It is, as the original signifies, fastened to him, as it were, by strong cords, firmly or deeply fixed in his inmost nature, pervading, subduing and degrading the powers, faculties, feelings and acts of the soul.

God asserts that "the children of men" are "all gone aside, are altogether become filthy : none doeth good, no, not one." (Ps. 14, 3.) Or as the Apostle expresses it: "There is none righteous," in his natural state, "no, not one." Every soul therefore is "guilty before God." (Rom. 8, 10, 19.)

And "that which is born of the flesh is flesh." (John 3, 6.) This is a natural and inevitable result. Like begets like. The plant will ever be of the nature of the seed that produces it. The corrupt tree brings forth corrupt fruit. The offspring are like the parents. Depraved parents, therefore, have depraved children. They resemble them not only in their physical and mental natures, but also in their moral. Their minds and their natures are transmitted with their bodies, by natural tradition. This is evident from facts; for children not only resemble their parents in physical features, but in mental dispositions, and also in their passions, affections and evil propensities. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." Man's depraved nature is fleshly, void of the saving influences of the Spirit, carnal and corrupt, therefore at enmity with the Spirit, and opposed to virtue. All who proceed from sinful and corrupt parents, are sinful and corrupt. This is natural, certain, inevitable!

The native moral pollution or unholiness of infants has been fully proved by the passages already cited, and must be admitted by all who correctly understand the teachings of the Bible. Although, through the atonement of Christ, infants are in a *salvable* state, or in a *position that they may be saved*, it does not follow that they are born in a state of justification or perfect innocence; and that, consequently, they are in no sense *guilty*. They are not only depraved and polluted, but, in a certain sense, they are guilty, not by personal accountability, but as involved in the guilt of Adam's sin. This important truth is evident from scripture and facts, and is a doctrine taught and received by the Wesleyan Church.

The Psalmist says, "I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me." We have already shown that these words refer to man's original depravity, which is the source whence all sin proceeds. Dr. Clarke states, "I believe David to speak here of what is commonly called *original sin*. The sinful principle diffused itself through the whole, so that body and mind grew up in a state of corruption and moral imperfection." The native innocence of infants cannot be maintained without positively contradicting this text. Benson adds, "This verse is generally understood by both Jews and Christians, and most justly, of what we call original sin."

Again: "The Lord hath laid on him the *iniquity* of us *all*." (Isa., 53, 6.) Dr. Clarke: "The Lord hath caused to meet



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in him the punishment due the iniquities of all." Benson :  
" *He hath made to meet on him*, the punishment due for all the  
sins of all mankind." Infants are here included, or otherwise  
*all* only means a *part*, which is absurd. If the punishment  
due to the original sin attached to infants was not laid on  
Christ, he never died for them, so they are safe without a  
Redeemer. If infants be included in the passage, which is  
most evident, they are guilty ; for their "*iniquity* was laid  
upon Christ."

If Christ suffered for infants, (and who will question this  
truth,) it was either for their guilt or their innocence. Where  
there is no guilt, there is no exposure to forfeiture or other  
penalty; and a perfect innocent being could not suffer eternal  
torment, nor even be punished at all. If infants be in a state  
of justification or perfect innocence, it will follow that the  
sufferings of Christ, as to them, were useless. The truth,  
however, is, they not only come into the world with polluted  
natures, but are exposed to punishment, and are therefore  
guilty in view of the Law and Government of God, as a conse-  
quence of original sin visited upon them from Adam. This  
view of the subject is stated in the New Testament, "that  
every mouth may be stopped, and *all the world* may become  
*guilty* before God"; for *all* have *sinned*, and come short of the  
glory of God." (Rom. 3, 19, 23.) Dr. Clarke says, "Both  
Jews and Gentiles *stand convicted before God*; for all mankind  
have sinned against this law"; therefore all are "equally help-  
less and guilty." Benson adds, "*all have sinned* in Adam and  
in their own persons; by a sinful nature, sinful tempers, and  
sinful actions." "All men" are said to be under "condemna-  
tion" for "the offence of one," or by one offence. (Rom. 5,  
18.) "All men," here include infants, who are under con-  
demnation for the sin of Adam, and are, as a necessary conse-  
quence, involved in the guilt of Adam's sin. Who can care-  
fully read the fifth chapter to the Romans, and not be con-  
vinced that all mankind, of every age, are accounted by God  
as sinful and guilty, for the disobedience of Adam? Dr.  
Clarke, therefore, justly says, "in or through Adam, guilt  
came upon all men."

This doctrine is also evident from *facts*. By Adam's sin  
infants are not only polluted, or bring into the world with  
them depraved natures, but they are liable to pain, suffering,  
disease, sickness and death. These, we presume, could not be  
inflicted upon infants if they were perfectly innocent or pure,  
and in no way involved in Adam's transgression. That they  
thus suffer is proof sufficient that God does not view them as  
innocent, spotless and pure, but as fallen, depraved and guilty,  
in view of His law and Government, in consequence of original

sin being visited upon them. "By one man," Adam, "sin entered into the world,"—(Rom. 5, 12,) his transgression and its consequences, including actual sin, and a sinful nature, which he conveyed to all his posterity. Dr. Clarke says, "*Natural* evil is evidently the effect of *moral* evil; if man had never sinned, he had never suffered." "Death passed upon all men,"—Hence "we see that all human beings partook in the consequences of Adam's sin." "For that all have sinned." All are born with a depraved sinful nature. It is a fearful truth: "There has never been one instance of an immaculate human soul since the fall of Adam."

The doctrine of infant depravity and guilt is believed and taught as a fundamental truth, in the Standard Works of the Methodist Church. We shall only select from them a few proofs, taken from the very many found in their writings. Mr. Wesley, "On Original Sin," says, "No just constitution can punish the *innocent*; therefore, God does not look upon infants as innocent, but as involved in the *guilt* of Adam's sin. Otherwise, death, the punishment denounced against sin, could not be inflicted upon them." Again: "Death is not only a natural but a penal evil, and comes upon infants as *guilty* and *condemned*, not for their own sins, for they had none; but for the sin of Adam, their legal head, their appointed representative." Mr. Flecher, in his appeal says, "If we are naturally innocent, we have a natural power to remain so, and by a proper use of it, we may avoid standing in need of the salvation procured by Christ for the lost." Watson's Institutes:—"The fact of (infants) being born liable to death, a part of the penalty is sufficient to show that they were born under the whole malediction." Again: "The death and suffering to which children are subject, is a proof that all men, from their birth, are constituted, as the Apostle has it, and treated as sinners." Mr. Benson, Dr. Clarke, Dr. Bunting, and all the leading minds of the Methodist Church hold the same doctrine. The guilt of Adam's sin, it must be admitted, from scripture and facts, as sanctioned and taught in Wesleyan Theology, is charged upon his whole posterity. That sound scholar and theologian, the gentlemanly and devoted Rev. W. L. Thornton, M. A., in one of his latest utterances, expresses the following important truth: "We never felt the necessity more than *now* of affirming man's *utter* fall, ruin, and hopelessness, and his need of a divine Saviour."

That *all* are depraved and guilty before God are clearly and forcibly stated in the doctrinal standards of Wesleyan Methodism. Wesley says, "In Adam all died, all human kind, all who were then in Adam's loins. The natural consequence of this is, that every one descended from him, comes into the

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world spiritually dead, dead to God, *wholly dead in sin*, entirely void of the life of God, void of the image of God, of all that *righteousness* and *holiness* wherein Adam was created. Instead of this, every man born into the world, *now* bears the image of the devil, in pride and self-will; the image of the beast, in sensual appetites and desires. This, then, is the foundation of the new birth, the *entire corruption* of our nature. Hence it is, that being 'born in sin,' we must be born again. Hence, every one born of a woman, must be born of the spirit of God." Benson states, "We sinned in Adam, and derived from him a corrupt nature; and were thereby made subject to condemnation, and are earthly, sensual, and devilish." Mr. Watson believed that *all mankind* are *by nature totally depraved*: "The doctrine, then, of Scripture is, I think, clearly established to be that of the natural and universal corruption of man's nature." Dr. Clarke adds: "Not one human spirit is born into the world without this corruption of nature. All are impure and unholy; and from this principle of depravity all transgression is produced; and from this corruption of nature God alone can save." These quotations are certainly sufficient to show the views of the leading minds in the Wesleyan Body on this subject. They held the total depravity of human nature; and their true followers must retain the same doctrine.

Man then does not come into the world, as some have erroneously asserted, with a nature so pure, or in such a state, that he is equally willing and able to receive either good or evil. He is not a mere passive thing, without any bias or inclination to good or evil. His nature is fallen and polluted, and he is, as an inevitable consequence, disposed to evil and not to good. He is wholly corrupt, and naturally averse to God and divine things. He is sunk into pride and self-will, the very image of Satan; and into sensual appetites, desires and passions, the image of the beasts that perish. He is not only destitute of innate righteousness, but he is governed by inherent depravity.

### HUMAN SALVABILITY.

By the *salvability* of man we mean that state in which the human family is placed, in consequence of the atonement of Christ, so that *they can be saved*. In this position are both infants and adults. But the *saving benefits* of the atonement have not so "come upon all men" as to *immediately* save them from all the consequences of the fall. They are by the death of Christ in a *salvable* state, but not fully saved by the atonement until its saving benefits are applied to them by the agency of the Divine Spirit; and this is equally applicable to infants as to adults. Accountable beings do not experience these saving

benefits until they repent of their sins, and believe in Christ with their hearts unto righteousness, and their natures are renewed by the Spirit of God ; and these saving benefits are also so applied to infants by the Agency of the Holy Spirit, that should they die before they become moral agents, they are prepared for, and saved in Heaven. This view of the subject is taken by Mr. Watson. He says, This benefit or free gift did not so "come upon all men" as "to relieve them *immediately* from the sentence of death. This is obvious, from men being still liable to die, and from the existence of a corrupt nature or spiritual death in all mankind. As this is the case with adults, who grow up from a state of childhood, and who can both trace the corruptness of their nature to their earliest years, and were always liable to bodily death ; so for this reason, it did not come immediately upon children, whether they die in infancy or not. For there is no more reason to conclude, that those children who die in infancy were born with a pure nature, than they who live to manhood." The fact of their being born liable to death, a part of the penalty, is sufficient to show, that they were born under the whole malediction.

But the "free gift" came upon all men, by the righteousness of one, *in order to* "justification of life." By it they are salvable, or can be saved. However, by it, infants are not born justified and regenerated, nor does it necessarily follow that, in consequence of their salvability, they must, upon their coming into the world, become justified or perfectly innocent. To say then that original sin is taken away, as to infants, by Christ, is not the correct view of the subject. The "free gift" is bestowed upon all men, adults and infants, *in order to* justification of life, or the adjudging of the condemned to live.

It is, therefore, a blessed truth, recorded in the Bible, that in consequence of the atonement of Christ, children are born in a state of *initial* salvation, or as the Apostle terms it, "unto," (*eis*), *in order to* "justification of life." (Rom. 5, 18.) They are so reconciled to God by the death of Christ, that should they die in infancy, before committing actual sin, He will, by the purifying influence of His Spirit, prepare them for heaven, and receive them to glory. Mention is made in Scripture of a *two-fold* reconciliation, by the death of the Son of God. The first is the reconciliation of our *species*, by which they are in a state of salvability, termed *the world*, without any conditions, on the part of the reconciled ; the second is the reconciliation and salvation of *believing individuals*, after having committed actual sin, by faith in "His blood." By the first, infants dying in infancy, before being guilty of actual sin, are by the Spirit of God fitted for heaven, and saved eternally. In consequence of their relation to the first Adam, the general

representative of mankind, they were "made sinners;" but by their relation to the second Adam, the last general representative of the human race, the "free gift came upon" them *in order to* "justification of life." By "the offence of one," or by one offence, "judgment came upon" infants to their "condemnation;" but "by the righteousness of one," or by one righteousness, "the free gift came upon" them "unto," or *in order to*, "justification of life." By one sin, all come into condemnation; so by one righteous act, all come unto, or for the purpose of, justification of life. God then can, consistently with His divine character, save infants, whom he takes from the world before they arrive at the age of accountability, without any condition on their part; and he can also, in perfect accordance with his justice and holiness, save all those who believe in Christ "with the heart unto righteousness."

But man does not come into the world with such a nature, that he is equally disposed to receive either good or evil. We cannot wholly impress upon the infant mind what we please. It is not in our power to change the depraved current of man's fallen mind, so as to induce him to fully do the will of God. Mere human efforts cannot change his sinful nature, or raise him from the ruins of the fall. Some say that an infant is like a sheet of white paper, upon which we can write what we please. This, however, is a grand mistake! Impart to the infant so soon as it is capable of knowledge, moral and true spiritual instruction, and enforce the same by precepts and examples, still its nature will not be changed; and in defiance of every effort, and regardless of consequences, human depravity will crop out, and produce actual transgression. A corrupt tree, a depraved nature, cannot scripturally bring forth the fruits of righteousness. The whole man is in a state of depravity, and nothing but Divine power can change him.

It is then contrary to the spiritual position of redeemed fallen man, the positive declarations of scripture, and unquestionable facts, to assert that infants may be so instructed, educated, watched over and guided, that they will retain, when they come to years of maturity, and through life, what is termed their justification of life, or initial salvation, and finally by it *alone* be brought to heaven.

This doctrine is in direct opposition to man's total depravity and to the nature of infant salvability, as stated in the Bible. It is however a blessed truth, that by the sacrifice of Christ, infants are placed in such a state of initial salvation that God can consistently with his justice, and will, if he sees fit to take them from the world before they are capable of committing actual sin, so change and purify their souls from the depravity and spiritual pollution inherent in their fallen natures, by the divine



influences of His Spirit, independent of any act on their part, as to prepare them for heaven, and thus save them forever. They are "the first fruits unto God and the Lamb." But it does not follow because they are in a state of salvability, that dying in infancy, they go to heaven simply by virtue of this state; nor is it possible for those who live to years of maturity to enjoy religion and find their way to heaven *merely* by their initial salvation, or because they were born under the covenant of mercy, and within the reach of salvation.

Heaven is a holy place, and nothing unholy can enter there, is an acknowledged truth: but infants, notwithstanding their salvability, are unholy, are depraved, wholly void of that original righteousness in which man was created; therefore the fact, that they are born salvable, or may be saved, does not prove that this state, without the renewing and purifying influences of the Divine Spirit upon their infant minds, can fit them for heaven; or that by it alone can moral agents live the life of the christian, and finally enter heaven. The mere fact that man is in a *salvable state*, or *can be saved*, does not prove that he is *actually saved*. This is applicable to both infants and adults.

The atonement, simply considered as an expiation for sin, made no sinner *immediately and absolutely righteous*. The sacrifice of Christ does not apply itself to the soul of man. It is the office of the Divine Spirit to "take of the things of Christ, and show them to us." But it does not necessarily follow that infants either before or upon their coming into the world, are so in contact with the Holy Spirit as to be justified, regenerated, or perfectly innocent. By the atonement of Christ, the "free gift" comes upon "all men," not to justify or purify them immediately, and as to adults, unconditionally, but *in order to* justification of life. The provision is made, the blood of Christ has been shed, and, according to God's plan, the spirit applies it to the justification, not of those who always have been righteous, but of the ungodly. The adult is justified by faith. The infant is not required to believe, but should it die in infancy, we may justly conclude, it is justified and renewed by the Spirit of God, and prepared for heaven. The notion that infants are through Christ constituted perfectly innocent, before they were made guilty, or before they existed, or so soon as they began to exist, is absurd, unscriptural and contrary to facts.

To suppose otherwise is to come in contact, as we have already proved, with the Bible. Adam being the common parent, or general representative of the whole human family, he, by the transgression of God's law, not only placed himself, but all his offspring, under the curse and wrath of God. "By the offence of one man sin entered into the world, and death

by sin ; and so death passed upon all men, in whom all have sinned." All are by nature "under sin ;" for "there is none righteous, no, not one." "In Adam all died." All come into the world with sinful natures, void of all spiritual life and power, wholly dead to God ; and as the natural result of this depravity, when they come to years of accountability, they, being influenced by their depraved natures, are guilty of actual sin.

Again : It is contrary to *facts*. We may pass over the helplessness, ignorance, stupidity and native uncleanness of infants, which prove their degradation, and that they are cursed for man's apostasy. But if we carefully observe their anger, self-will, pride, hatred, revenge, selfishness, vanity, impatience, obstinancy, aversion to rule or restraint, their proneness to indulgence in sensual propensities and appetites, and a variety of other evil dispositions and tendencies, we cannot but perceive that these prove their depravity. They are altogether contrary to the saving influences and renewing effects of the Holy Spirit. Here we discover not only that they are fallen beings, but their natures are so depraved, that without the cleansing efficacy of the Divine Spirit they cannot be prepared for, or enter heaven, whether dying in infancy or living to years of maturity. It cannot be possible for infants to go to heaven with such diabolical natures. To live forever in the mansions of purity and glory they must be prepared for them ; and this preparation can only be effected by the purifying influences of the Spirit of God. Their hatred, selfishness, pride, self-will, unhallowed dispositions and propensities, &c., &c., must be subdued, conquered and utterly annihilated, that they may live forever with Jesus. Their *initial* salvation or *salvability* then is not sufficient of itself to save them. If it prepared them for, or if by it alone they were fit for heaven, they would be delivered from their depraved natures, unhallowed desires and sinful developments. This, however, is not the case ; still, as they are born under the covenant of mercy, God will by His Spirit, should they die in infancy, cleanse them from their depravity, prepare them for, and save them in heaven.

That infants are not born perfectly innocent is evident from the fact, that the seeds of natural and moral evil are propagated, or transmitted by natural traduction. Mortal and sinful man could not communicate properties which he did not possess. He must transmit those which constitute his natural and moral likeness ; therefore all his posterity must resemble himself. Nothing short of a constant miraculous energy, presiding over the formation and development of every human body and soul, could prevent these seeds of evil from existing. They are not produced in man by his own personal transgressions ; but they

exist before the human being is capable of actual sin, or the exercise of will and judgment, so as to prefer and determine. This is evident from the evil propensities, etc., of children, long before reason can have any influence or control over passion. It is also demonstrated by the sufferings and death of infants.

The doctrine of the perfect innocence of infants, which has been the source of pernicious heresies in the church, is encumbered with *insuperable difficulties*.

1. It avows the principle that the stream is more perfect than the fountain whence it emanates. Adam's nature was sinful and guilty: if he imparted a pure and innocent nature to his posterity, the stream must rise in perfection above its fountain; but this is both absurd and unscriptural.

2. It destroys, to use the words of Dr. Ralston, "the connection between cause and effect, and thus saps the foundation of all philosophy and reason. That death is the effect of sin and guilt, the scriptures plainly declare. Now, if all guilt is taken away in infants, the effect of guilt exists, in their case, without a cause; nor can it, on Bible principles, be accounted for.

3. It overturns a radical and essential principle in the Divine Government; which is that the guilty, and not the innocent, are the proper subjects of punishment. Now if infants are perfectly innocent it follows, as they are punished with death, that the just principles of government are destroyed.

4. It strikes at the foundation of the doctrine of redemption. For if infants are innocent, Christ came not to save them; he came to save sinners."

It is then an important truth, evident from scripture, reason and the position of man, that infants are born depraved and sinful, and are guilty in view of the law and government of God, in consequence of being involved in the guilt of Adam's sin. The "free gift" has, however, come upon infants as well as adults, *in order to* justification of life. By it infants are in a salvable state, through the atonement of Christ, so that they can be saved, and will, if they die in infancy. But their salvability does not of itself immediately place them in a state of justification, regeneration or perfect innocence, as is certain from, 1st, The express declarations of scripture; 2nd, Their depraved natures and practices; and 3rd, Their sufferings and death. But it secures to them, independent of any act on their part, initial salvation, and in case of death, an ultimate rescue from the deplorable condition and suffering in which they are involved by original sin. Redemption and regeneration are different in their nature and effects. The former procured the salvation of all men, so that they may be saved, and absolutely secures eternal life for all who die in infancy; but regeneration does not necessarily accompany salvability, as is demonstrated by the position of both infants and adults.

Great stress is placed by some, who are desirous to establish the doctrine of the perfect innocence of infants, upon those parts of the Bible where mention is made of "justification of life," "little ones," "little children," &c. Let us then examine these different passages. The word *justification* only occurs twice in the New Testament, and in both passages it directly refers to the *provision* for, or *salvability* of mankind. Christ "was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification." (Rom. 4, 25.) He died for our sins, and rose from the dead to assure us that his sacrifice made an atonement for transgression. Here the effect of Christ's death, or the *provision* for man's salvation, is termed justification. Dr Clarke, Mr. Benson and others give it the same meaning. The Doctor says, "He was raised that we might have the fullest assurance that the death of Christ had accomplished the end for which it took place." "The death of Christ was an *atonement* or *expiation* for the sin of the world." Benson asserts, He "made an atonement" for us, and was raised to "show us that the sacrifice which he offered for the expiation of our sins," or the sins of the whole world, "was accepted of the Father." The next passages states "the free gift came upon all men unto," or in *order to*, "justification of life." (Rom. 5, 18.) In this text the effects of Christ's death are called "justification." The Apostle here compares Christ and Adam. By Adam's sin all men are *condemned*, the condemnatory sentence was passed upon them; so "by the righteousness of One," Christ, "the free gift," the atonement and its benefits, are *provided for*, and *offered to*, the whole human race. "Condemnation" in consequence of Adam's sin, overwhelmed him and his posterity; "but the free gift," the salvation purchased by Christ, "came upon all men unto," or as the little preposition *eis* also signifies, *in order to* "justification of life." This view of the passage especially refers to the *provision* of mercy which God has provided for both infants and adults, through the sacrificial death of Christ, by which they are placed in a *salvable* state, and may thus be saved from sin and its consequences, consistently with the justice and government of God. Watson: "The redemption of man by Christ, doubtless, was not an after-thought brought in upon man's apostacy; it was a *provision*, and when man fell, he found justice hand in hand with mercy." "This 'free gift' is bestowed upon all men, (*eis*) *in order to* justification of life, that is, that act of God by which a sinner, under sentence of death, is adjudged to life." Dr. Ralston adds, "The free gift came upon such (infants) 'unto' (*eis*) or *in order to* justification of life." From what has already been presented, it will follow, that the doctrine of innate total depravity, so far as the eternal destiny of infants is concerned, in-

volves no difficulty in the Divine administration ; but through the infinite mercy of God in Christ J  sus, they are in a *salvable* state, in *order* to the full attainment of the blessings purchased by Christ ; and should they die before committing actual sin, God by His spirit will prepare them for, and save them in heaven. This passage then does not prove the perfect purity or innocence of infants ; but that they are in a state of salvability, or can be saved, and assuredly will, should they die in infancy.

The *perfect innocence* of infants cannot be proved from these words : "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. 18, 3.) In the context mention is made of "this little child," "such little child," and "these little ones." These expressions, as found in this Chapter, do not refer to infants or young children, but only to young believers, or persons young in faith, knowledge and experience. Such persons are designated "babies in Christ," "children," "little children," and "little ones." In the sixth verse they are termed, "these little ones, *which believe in me.*" This clearly proves that these little ones, were *young christian believers*. The fact that they *believed* in Christ evidently shows that these passages must be applied to adults, and not to infants, who are incapable of the exercise of faith. Our standard commentators are of the same opinion. By "one such little child," Dr. Clarke says, Our Lord "means a *disciple* only." Again : "Whosoever shall cause one of the least of these," the *little ones*, "who believe in me to be stumbled,—to go into the spirit of the world, or give way to sin,—such an one shall meet with most exemplary punishment." Benson : "Any one of my humble and meek followers." Watson : "The *little ones* were the true servants of and Apostles of Our Lord."

See "that ye despise not one of these little ones." Benson : "Be careful to *receive*, and not *offend*, the very weakest believer in Christ." Clarke : "One of my simple, loving, humble disciples." These and such expressions cannot be applied here to infants or little children, but to the humble, pious, sincere believers in Christ, who are young in Christian experience and knowledge.

Again : "Jesus said, Suffer little children to come to me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God." These words may be explained by answering a few inquiries.

1. What are we to understand by "the kingdom of God" ? It is admitted, "the kingdom of heaven," and "the kingdom of God," are substantially the same. They imply (1) The *future happiness* of all infants that die in infancy, and the faithful followers of Christ who die in the faith, in his Heavenly Kingdom ; and (2) The blessings of His early kingdom : or the Christian religion with all its present gifts and blessings.



2. Who are entitled or have a right to the benefits of this kingdom? According to its latter signification all mankind are, through Christ's atonement, placed within the reach of the blessings of salvation; and all infants dying in infancy, are through it eternally saved. That infants do partake of the blessings of Christ's spiritual kingdom in this world is evident from, 1, They are born in a salvable state, or can be saved. 2, They are entitled to the necessary influences of the Holy Spirit, with every other required benefit of the atonement. 3, Should they die before accountability God will, by His Spirit, prepare them for heaven. 4, After death he will take them to their heavenly home, to be forever with Jesus. 5, Such as are spared to maturity will, through the sacrifice of Christ, experience preventing grace, the drawings of the Father, the workings of conscience, the light by which the Son of God "enlightens every one that cometh into the world," and the gracious influences of His Spirit, who works in every child of man. 6, Should they yield to these, and faithfully serve God, they will enjoy religion in life, and live with God forever. These, with many unmentioned blessings, are through Christ bestowed upon children. It may, therefore, be well said, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven." Or, according to Dr. Clarke, "The kingdom of heaven is composed of such." The kingdom of glory is, to a great extent, literally composed of such; and only those who resemble little children, as to their humility, freedom from worldly ambition and desire of power, can be received into either His spiritual or heavenly kingdom.

The import of the words, "Of such is the kingdom of God," can only be understood from the context where they appear, or from other portions of the Bible. In the passage immediately connected with the above quotation we read, "Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein." These words only relate to the qualifications and character of those who will be received into the kingdom of God. This appears evident from the language of Christ in the Gospels. (Matt. 18, 2, 14; Mark 10, 14, 15; Luke 18, 16, 17.) When the disciples had been reasoning and disputing, who "should be greatest in the kingdom of God, Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, and said,—Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." Again: Who "shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven." It then seems evident from the words just cited, and from, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven," that Christ especially referred to a spirit of humility and full surrender to Him, as the chief qualifications in order to admission into the kingdom of heaven. These passages, however, do

not afford any proof that children are born in a state of regeneration or perfect innocence, by the immediate contact and influences of the Holy Spirit, in consequence of infant salvability. We are taught from these and similar portions of Scripture, that they relate to humility, submission to the Divine Will and dispensations, and a proper Scriptural consecration to God, as being among the principal requirements for an entrance into the heavenly kingdom.

To believe, therefore, that infants may be so instructed, watched over and preserved from contaminating influences, as to grow up religious, without experiencing either justification by personal faith in Christ, or the regeneration of their natures by the power of the Holy Spirit; and to enjoy the love and favor of God here, and at last find their way to heaven, appears to be a doctrine in direct opposition to the teachings of the Bible, destructive to true religion, and the souls of men.

Persons living to years of maturity, no matter how carefully watched over, and religiously instructed, can neither be truly religious, nor eternally saved, by their *mere* salvability. Were they even to retain its benefits they would not, as we have already proved, without the renewing influences of the Spirit, by it alone, be either religious here, or enter heaven hereafter. But have any, who have lived to be moral agents, capable of knowing and doing right and wrong, ever retained their salvable state? Have they not all, by actual sin, forfeited the spiritual position they occupied in infancy? And as a necessary consequence, in order to enjoy religion in life, they must be justified by faith in Christ, and regenerated by the power of the Holy Spirit; and that they may live forever in glory, their natures must, like all true believers, be sanctified by the influences of God's Spirit.

To refer to no other parts of the Bible, those already adduced are sufficient to prove that the depravity of human nature is so deep and universal, and still exists in all, that it seems impossible for children to be saved from its consequences merely by their salvability, independent of the renewing influences of the Divine Spirit; or for adults to be religious and saved by it, without justification through faith in Christ, the regeneration of their natures and purity of heart, by the agency of the Holy Spirit.

To believe and teach them that adults may by their salvability *alone* be religious in life, and finally by it be saved in heaven, is a sentiment *fraught with danger and fearful consequences*. It is a heresy of no ordinary magnitude, dangerous to the individual, the church, and the world. It strikes at the foundation of vital religion, virtually repudiates inherent depravity, dispenses with justification by faith alone, and the re-

newing influences of the Holy Spirit on the human mind, and induces those who have embraced this sentiment to believe they can be eternally saved by their initial salvation. How fearful, how deceptive, how destructive in its consequences! If this error became the belief of the Church, souls would through it perish, vital religion would no longer be enjoyed, and mankind, so far from becoming the servants of Christ, would live without God in the world, while believing they were religious.

But while the Bible asserts that true, inward, heartfelt religion can only be attained and enjoyed by moral agents and accountable beings, through justification by faith in Christ, and the regeneration of their natures by Divine power; and that to be admitted into heaven they must be wholly sanctified by the sacred operations of God's Spirit; we conclude they cannot be saved merely because they are in a *salvable state*, but "by grace through faith."

To conclude: Children, as they are able to receive instruction, should be taught the principles of the Bible. Their depravity, exposure and utter helplessness, without Divine aid, must be presented to their minds. The nature and design of the atonement; the necessity, nature and enjoyments of true religion; the means of its attainment and evidences of its possession, are to be explained and enforced. They must have "line upon line, precept upon precept." They are to "remember their Creator in the days of their youth:" To understand, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature;" and that Jesus has said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments."